

## Message Text

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SUBJECT: NARCOTICS COUNTRY PAPER FOR BELGIUM

1. EUR/NE HAS BEEN ASKED TO UPDATE BY FEBRUARY 18 COUNTRY PAPER ON BELGIUM PREPARED LAST MARCH. BRIEF UNCLASSIFIED PAPER (2-3 PAGES) IS FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT'S SENIOR ADVISOR ON INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MATTERS AND BY OTHER USG OFFICIALS AS BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS AND INQUIRIES FROM CONGRESSMEN AND PUBLIC. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FULL UPDATE IN TIMELY FASHION, EUR/NE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S SUGGESTIONS BY PRIORITY CABLE FOR CHANGES IN CURRENT PAPER, TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS.

2. A. ILLICIT DRUG PROBLEM. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ILLICIT PROCESSING OF NARCOTICS IN BELGIUM, BUT ORGANIZED  
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TRANSHIPMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSUMPTION HAVE INCREASED AND THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN DRUG ABUSE, AS WELL AS ILLEGAL IMPORTS OF LIMITED QUANTITIES OF NARCOTICS. INDIVIDUAL CONSUMPTION OF HASHISH AND MARIHUANA IS MAIN PROBLEM. MUCH OF THIS IS IMPORTED BY IMMIGRANT WORKERS FOR INDIVIDUAL USE. LOCAL AUTHORITIES RECOGNIZE THEY ARE CONFRONTED WITH A POTENTIAL DRUG PROBLEM WHICH

IS STILL OF LIMITED PROPORTIONS. WHILE DRUG TRAFFICKING INTO BELGIUM HAS INCREASED, DRUG ABUSE APPEARS TO HAVE

STABILIZED AT A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL AS COMPARED WITH SITUATION IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF DRUGS IN NETHERLANDS COULD LEAD TO GREATER USE IN BELGIUM GIVEN THE OPEN BORDER.

3. B. DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS. CURRENT LEGISLATION PROHIBITS POSSESSION OF MARIHUANA AND ADDICTIVE DRUGS THOUGH PENALTIES ARE MILD: TWO-YEAR IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF \$200 FOR USE OR UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION. BELGIAN PARLIAMENT PASSED NEW LEGISLATION IN JUNE 1975 INCREASING PENALTIES FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING, WITH PARTICULARLY SEVERE PENALTIES FOR ORGANIZED TRAFFICKING (UP TO 20 YEARS). LEGISLATIVE EFFORT TO PROVIDE FOR REHABILITATION OF DRUG USERS FAILED LARGELY BECAUSE OF RELUCTANCE TO FINANCE NECESSARY REHABILITATION EFFORTS. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ESTIMATE DETERRENT EFFECT OF NEW LAW, BUT IT IS EXPECTED TO BE A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN TOTAL BELGIAN EFFORT TO DISCOURAGE DRUG TRAFFICKERS FROM USING BELGIUM AS A TRANSIT POINT FOR DRUGS FOR OTHER MARKETS, PARTICULARLY AMSTERDAM.

4. NEW BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INFORMATION ESTABLISHED IN MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IN 1971, WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING ALL AVAILABLE INTELLIGENCE ON DRUG MATTERS. VIOLATIONS REQUIRING FOLLOW-UP ARE REFERRED TO REGIONAL BRIGADES OF POLICE JUDICIAIRE FOR INVESTIGATION AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARRESTS. WHILE BELGIAN ENFORCEMENT EFFORT IMPROVED SUBSTANTIALLY OVER PAST YEAR, IT CONTINUES TO BE HAMPERED BY LIMITED INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION, SHORTAGES OF TRAINED POLICE PERSONNEL AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT, AND INADEQUATE ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. BELGIUM HAS NOT YET RATIFIED PROTOCOL TO AMEND SINGLE CONVENTION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS OF 1961 OR SIGNED CONVENTION OF PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES. BELGIUM HAS COOPERATED IN EXTRADITION AND EXPULSION OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS WHEN REQUESTED. BELGIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL WAS DELAYED IN 1974 AND NOT RENEWED IN 1975 OR 1976 DUE LARGELY TO BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS. THERE IS SOME HOPE THAT IT WILL BE RENEWED IN 1977, BUT THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE FUNDING SITUATION.

5. C. U.S. PROGRAMS. BELGIANS HAVE CLEARLY INDICATED THEY WANT A MORE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM, AND ARE CONTINUING TO COOPERATE WITH THE US, OTHER GOVERNMENTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

THREE DEA REPRESENTATIVES ARE STATIONED AT BRUSSELS, AND BELGIAN CUSTOMS COOPERATES CLOSELY WITH REGIONAL U.S. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS STATIONED AT PARIS. TRAINING OF JUDICIAL POLICE OFFICERS HAS BEEN PROVIDED

BY DEA AND CUSTOMS. EACH AGENCY CONDUCTED MONTH-LONG SEMINARS IN 1975. EACH WAS WELL-RECEIVED AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE OVER-ALL EFFORT TO ENHANCE BELGIAN DRUG INTERDICTION CAPABILITY. AT PRESENT THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR IN-COUNTRY TRAINING IN FY-76 BY EITHER AGENCY.  
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